DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 227 664 FL 013 506

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TITLE Applied Linguistics and the Responsibilities of the Urban University.
PUB DATE Dec 82
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Applied Linguistics (San Diego, CA, December 1982).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Applied Linguistics; *Curriculum Development; *Doctoral Degrees; Higher Education; Language Attitudes; *Language Variation; Linguistic Theory; *Nonstandard Dialects; Program Development; Research Needs; *Urban Language
IDENTIFIERS *City University of New York; New York (New York)

ABSTRACT

The City University of New York is an ideal home for the doctoral training center in urban and applied linguistics since it is located in an area with a large number of non-English speakers demonstrating varied dialect forms, immigrant groups from many countries, and individuals representing all economic and social levels. In addition, there are many speakers of native New York City nonstandard and standard dialects of (American) English. This population provides the opportunity to study phonetic variants and language change, attitudes of native and other speakers, and the language of the performing arts centers. Thus far, a 1981 conference on careers for linguists has been conducted, and the program of study for the Ph.D. program is being developed. A series of working papers in applied and theoretical linguistics and a 1984 conference on research needs in applied linguistics are also being planned. The training program is being designed to encompass courses providing (1) a broad theoretical and applied linguistics base; (2) advanced and specialized study in applied and theoretical linguistics; (3) field methods study; and (4) a research thesis project in the field of specialization. A special program feature will include a series of colloquia by about five distinguished visitors per year. (SW)

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Applied Linguistics and the Responsibilities of the Urban University

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FL 013 506

Paper to be given at the AAAL Convention - San Diego, December, 1982

(x) Graduate School and University Center

ABSTRACT

The rationale of the urban university has shifted considerably in the course of the present century -- from the private, elitist school with its strong commitment to the classic disciplines, to the training ground of the intellectually inclined and strongly upwardly mobile children of immigrants, through more recent policies of admissions open to all, to the present state of pedagogical and curricular reassessment in the wake of the stressful changes in the nature of our urban centers and the students coming from them. Generally paralleling this, the urban university's commitment to the study of language has shifted in focus from philology through the development of linguistic theory (and the training of linguists primarily for research and professional teaching positions) to the training of highly specialized linguists who will develop careers in both academic and non-academic settings.

This paper reports a carefully planned, federally-funded, 3-year experiment launching a major doctoral training center in urban and applied linguistics in one of the nation's largest universities. The thrust and details of that experiment bridge theoretical and applied linguistic courses of study, special colloquia, carefully integrated fieldwork and major conferences, all leading to training of wider application than has been usual.

The University remains, for those who teach, study, or research therein, the place where theories are developed and tested, experiments conducted, information imparted, reports issued. Its major functions bridge additions by faculty and research teams to knowledge already available---to the training of students to the best of that faculty's ability. The hope and expectation are that these students may learn to develop their potentials to the utmost, and continue the ongoing process of increasing knowledge and training of others. This cycle is the result of the ever-present need to know and to understand what we did not know before. The process is inevitable for all of us who were students and who are now faculty; it has been a central part of university activity since the Middle Ages and it does not change.

What has changed is the social setting of this eternal cycle, specifically: (1) the nature of the student body and its needs as students project them; (2) the ways in which we, as faculty, prepare our students to meet those needs; (3) the function of the university as it relates to the larger community of which it is a part. For the university as a public institution, that "larger community" extends from the community of scholars within the disciplines themselves to the people and institutions of the community who support and nurture it, and who are directly affected by the knowledge that it generates. An important result of such changes is that concern about the real problems of our society (and how we resolve those problems) is now deeply embedded in our educational institutions. Our energies are expended, in good part, in solving these problems and needs,

as best we can. And the larger society is responsive to this academic desire for involvement by involving the academics, so that a political science professor and an economics professor can (and recently have) become Secretaries of State and Treasury. They can and do write publishable essays on the theory of one government's responsibility to the needs of another government. More importantly, they can actually implement such by drafting a congressional bill to forward military, agricultural or technical assistance thereto. The linguistics professor is moved to be similarly concerned not only with the development of theories of meaning, or the acquisition of second languages or of the theories of language change that explain language use at different societal levels or in different regional areas of the same urban environment, but with the actual development of materials to facilitate such acquisition in an English Language Training Center elsewhere, and much more. Such must be among the reasons why the AAAL came into being five years ago.

This paper, by two linguists who have walked for quite a while in both the theoretical and applied fields, is an attempt to share with you the steps which one Ph.D.-granting program in a large urban university has been taking toward increasing responsiveness to the needs of the "larger community," in this case one of the largest and most ethnically diverse cities in the world. It reports a carefully planned, federally-funded, 3-year experiment launching a major doctoral training center in urban and applied linguistics in one of the nation's largest universities. The thrust and the details of that experiment

bridge theoretical and applied linguistics courses of study, special colloquia, carefully integrated fieldwork and major conferences, all leading to training of wider application than has been usual. The linguistics Ph.D. Program of which we speak is at the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York.

The current President of the Graduate School has stated that "if there is a single concern linking most of our doctoral programs, centers, and institutes, it could be described as an "urban thrust." Yet, when it was initiated and for some time thereafter, the Linguistics Program did not form part of this "urban thrust." Why and how it eventually broadened that focus we describe here and in that spirit.

In its first decade at the Graduate School and University Center, the Ph.D. Program in Linguistics acquired a reputation for excellence in the theoretical training of its doctoral students. The decision to concentrate heavily upon linguistic theory had been made quite early in the development of the Program, since it was felt:

(1) most Ph.D's in linguistics would be seeking and finding employment in universities as teachers of linguistics;

(2) there was a need in the New York City area for a linguistics Ph.D. emphasizing theory, set in a transformational-generative framework;

(3) it was the proper role of graduate study at an institution of higher learning to deal with a body of knowledge in its abstract and generalized form; application would be left largely to others.

Much happened in the intervening years to alter the force of these assumptions, however, and with them the early decision to concentrate entirely upon theory within the Program. To some extent,

the real-world situation had changed. But it also seemed that some of the original assumptions needed re-examination. Thus, while it may in part have been a change in the role of higher education that fewer new Ph.D.'s in linguistics were finding employment as teachers of linguistics, the earlier situation in which they largely did so may have been the result of a definition of advanced training in linguistics which recruited those intent on becoming linguistics professors, and training them accordingly. Nor did the development of a strong, theoretical base serve as a self-evident matrix for the incorporation of knowledge from other disciplines, since the inter-relationship between two independently derived bodies of knowledge is itself a body of knowledge. This implies that students who intend to apply a particular kind of theoretical knowledge to some other domain should be trained in the application as well as the theory.

With these thoughts in mind, we sought and secured a federal grant to meet a recommendation of an evaluation team of three distinguished linguists. They had made a recommendation a few years back suggesting that if the CUNY Linguistics Ph.D. Program, with its distinguished faculty, moved in the direction of developing an applied linguistics program to its already-in-place theoretical track, "it would provide a very important model for other programs." Our obligation seemed clear.

A special advantage for us is the peculiar nature of the Metropolitan New York area. That area is a unique laboratory for the applied linguist. No other city contains such varied enclaves

of innumerable non-English speakers, with varied dialect forms. Many, many countries of Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean have provided, in reasonable numbers, numerous in-migrants to the Metropolitan New York area. I.E., the City possesses actual large neighborhoods of Chinese, German, Italian, Hispanic, Hungarian, Haitian, Japanese, Czech, Jamaican, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Russian, Norwegian, and many other non-native English speakers. The City also contains neighborhoods of all economic levels and social levels---from the very, very poor to the very, very wealthy. And, there are large numbers of speakers of native New York City nonstandard and standard dialects of (American) English. To make the situation slightly more complex and interesting, our public schools contain students, in large numbers, with minimal English language facility, since many in-migrants at all ages are very recently arrived from outside of the country. These non-native speakers are enrolled in kindergartens through senior colleges; they constitute a reasonable proportion of our student body.

Not to be overlooked are the speakers of English who retain overtones of their own languages within English as well as second-generation speakers who possess subtle traits of other languages within

their American English speech spectrum. Thus, a most complex linguistic array exists with opportunity to study phonetic variants, language change in a phonological, syntactic, semantic cauldron; attitudes of native language speakers to other speakers and the reverse; subtly and not so subtly different nonstandard varieties in a continuum to the well-regarded language patterns of standard speakers, all the way to the language of the performing arts centers. New York City is the hub of the country's mass media; it contains the largest number of theatre-playhouses in the world--from off-off-Broadway to on-Broadway. These latter sources provide still another dimension to language use, the study of which is not readily available anywhere else in the country in such dimensions or array.

With the factors in place, including federal grant support, a cooperative university administration and a reasonably distinguished faculty with expertise in many aspects of both theoretical and applied linguistics on hand, the Ph.D. Program in Linguistics at the GSUC could proceed to pilot a program to meet the needs we all here know about. We made, have completed, or have begun to implement the following plans:

Our first decision was to host a large Careers for Linguists Conference while we were making course and program plans. We did so, just a year ago--in December 1981--when we cohosted a two-day conference on that subject with LSA at its NYC convention. That conference stemmed from a warning by Roger Shuy at the 5th Annual Georgetown University Round Table, in 1974. You will recall his alarm, if you were there,

when he stated "As a result of its isolative behavior, linguistics is now beginning to suffer from not having a natural apprenticeship domain, making it difficult for graduates to find work." He argued that the linguist must overcome the feelings of "elitism and discover methods of breaking into such areas as information-processing and retrieval, medicine, psychiatry, lexicography, publishing, the communications industry, and educational consulting." Our two-day conference with invited, distinguished guests from the fields of lexicography, computers, education, government (language planning), publishing, United Nations (translation), industry/business, linguistic research and language disorders addressed us on (1) what linguists can do and (2) what linguists are doing, outside of academia. Those conference proceedings have been published. They are available from ERIC (under the title: Careers in Linguistics: New Horizons) through the Clearing House on Languages and Linguistics at the Center for Applied Linguistics for a nominal charge ($2.50). The thoughts and comments will need to be updated and expanded; other areas of activity will need to be added; the places where linguists can work in the non-academic world will need probing again. We hope to do so.

At the same time, we began to organize a special program of study with seven courses as a theoretical base (Ph.D. level introductory course in linguistics, modern linguistics theories, historical linguistics, applied linguistics, phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics) with additional courses to be chosen from advanced course study in sociolingiustics, dialectology, lexico-

logy-lexicography, the structures of uncommon and common language, multilingualism and bidialectalism, computational linguistics, pidgins-creoles, cross-cultural linguistics, field methods research, and discourse analysis (various aspects). All of these courses were to be offered over a three-year period, with additional course-work available in the English, Speech and Hearing Sciences, psychology, sociology, history, and the educational psychology Ph.D. Programs. Our first brochure announcing that program of courses and other requirements is available for you to see. (We have brought a few along.) Regular program examinations, studies and seminar courses in applied linguistics and a thesis complete the program.

Our course of study, as planned, will require that every student complete the program of study with some pertinent field work---perhaps in an ESL center (we do have a number of them affiliated with different branches of the senior colleges of the City University) or in a lexicography or publishing house (New York City is the major center for both of these activities) or in an applied linguistics research project with a member of our faculty, or teaching a related course in one of our senior colleges under the supervision of faculty there, as adjunct lecturers.

Our plans for the 1983 Calendar Year are not final. Both Dr. Solá and Dr. Bolinger have acted as consultants to our program, this past fall, sharing thoughts on how we might develop our program further. We are presently studying their remarks. Other consultants will be invited each year, for a three-year period--so that we may pick their brains and benefit from their insights.

b) We are planning to issue a series of Working Papers in applied and theoretical linguistics--papers being worked on by our faculty and students. Our first issue will probably come out during the latter part of the 1983 Calendar Year. We will be pleased to forward copies (and invoices) to any of you here at this convention, if you will inform us of your interest.

c) Finally, we hope to organize a two-day conference on "Research Needs in Applied Linguistics" for sometime in 1984. In a very preliminary way, we have begun to make plans for this conference and we shall be in touch with many of you or all of you through the mailing lists or published arms of the AAAL. We hope that some of you will read papers and all of you will come to listen.

Our plans seem clear and reasonable to us; their implementation will begin the second part of a three-year program next month; our success will be interpreted by the kinds of students which we attract, their development as scholars in the field, their successful careers that will stem from their preparation with us.

Thus, our training program, as it is presently beginning, tries to encompass courses that prepare the student with major aspects: a broad theoretical base and a broad applied linguistics base; advanced and specialized study in various aspects of applied and theoretical linguistics; field methods study in class and field work in a "unit" of applied linguistics activity; a research thesis project in the field of specialization.

We have added a special feature --the kind of extra that belongs in any Ph.D. experience, we thought:

a series of colloquia by distinguished visitors--about 5 or 6 a year. This past calendar year included colloquia addresses on "Problems in Developing a Bahamian English Dictionary" by Dr. John Holm, who is editing that work; "Aspects of the Analysis of Discourse" by Dr. Sally McLendon, an anthropological linguist; "Phonetic Analysis of the Speech Signal" by Dr. M. Goldstein, research acoustic phonetician at Haskins Labs; "Some Neurolinguistics Aspects of Aphasic Speech" by Dr. Edgar Zurif, whose research is heavily concentrated in that area. These preceding colloquia were presented during the Spring semester. This Fall, Dr. Donald Sola of Cornell University presented thoughts on "Aspects of Bilingual Education," and in November, Dr. Dwight Bolinger of Stanford University presented a colloquium on "Intonation as Visible Gesture," cohosted by us and the New York Academy of Sciences. At this writing,

and if all goes as we hope, we will have moved a distinguished program in theoretical linguistics to one in both theoretical and applied linguistics. That makes good sense to our University and to this discipline. We hope that you agree.